Connections
A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

December 27, 2012

Central Office

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Northeast
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Leadership Message: "Best Days Are Ahead of Us!"

by Jim Dickson

With a difficult 2012 behind it, MoDOT leadership gathered Dec. 13 in Jefferson City to consider what the next year may hold. More than 60 managers from across the state worked with MoDOT's director and his staff on the agency's direction, tangible results and values. The resounding message from gathering -- MoDOT's best days are ahead!

Director Kevin Keith sets out the key priorities and positive direction for the department with MoDOT leadership.

"MoDOT is doing fabulous," said MoDOT Director Kevin Keith. "Our roads and bridges are in good shape, fatalities and injuries are down and we're national leaders among DOTs when it comes to innovation, performance management and practical design."

According to Keith, the Bolder Five-Year Direction was hard, but he believes "the best days are ahead of us." Keith encouraged MoDOT managers to lead positively to reflect the positive direction the agency is headed.

"This was a day well spent," said Scott Marion, assistant director of Motor Carrier Services. "It's great to hear such positive direction from MoDOT's senior management. I think the entire room left a bit more charged to get things done." This year's summit was expanded to include assistant engineers and directors. The change allowed more managers to be involved in the process and offered an opportunity for staff development.

Keith also outlined four key priorities for the organization:

- Keeping Customers and Employees Safe – Every customer and employee should go home safe.
- Providing Outstanding Customer Service – Every employee needs to be friendly and responsive with our customers and each other.
- Keeping Our Transportation System the Best It Can Be for as Long as We Can.
- Get Ready to Deliver a Big Program Again – Even though the source of the funding is uncertain, MoDOT needs to be ready when new funding arrives.

Director Keith challenged leadership to be strategic in how the organization staffs up to 5,106 employees. He suggested involving the private sector more and changing how work is accomplished.

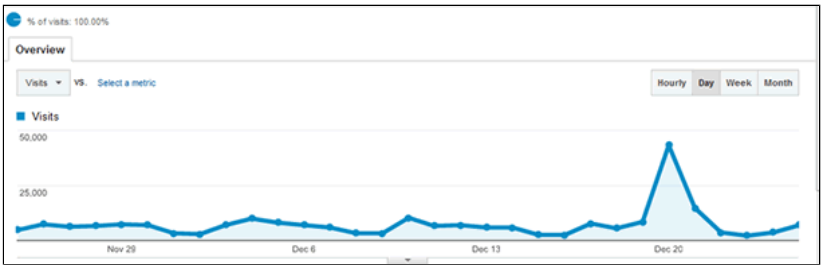
Assistant Chief Engineer Don Hillis works with department managers to trim the number of tangible results.

"We said we needed 5,106 employees to be successful," said Keith. "I still believe that, but we need to think about innovative ways to do the right thing, the right way. We can't be successful if we don't do this well."

Other topics covered by the director included increased collaboration between Central Office and district staffs and the new "On the Move" outreach effort with Missourians that will help create a vision for transportation.

The summit concluded with managers working in groups to streamline MoDOT's tangible results and values. A smaller group of managers will review all the ideas generated at the meeting to fine tune a new set of tangible results and values. The team will submit their proposal to the director for consideration. Approved changes could be in place as soon as the April Tracker.

Missourians Turn to Traveler Information Map for Road Conditions



Reports show visits to MoDOT's website.

Can you spot the snow day on the graph?

With the first real snow of the season, the Traveler Information Map saw its numbers sky rocket over a two day period.

In times of good weather, the map logs between 3,000 and 8,000 visits a day. Add snow into the mix and the number shoots up to five times that figure.

"On Dec. 20 alone we saw 43,000 people visit the map for road conditions information," said Matt Hiebert, customer relations. "The number dropped to 14,000 by the next day but that's still double our normal number of visits to the site."

Hiebert said visits taper off quickly after road crews begin making progress, but the spike in traffic shows that many Missourians are turning to the map to make important travel decisions.

With the addition of mobile tools like the Traveler Information App for Andorid and iPhones, Hiebert believes that number will continue to grow.

What's Happening

November's Winner

Carthage maintenance crew leader Curtis Buxton (right) is congratulated for winning November's Safety Jackpot by senior maintenance worker John Casey.

Buxton won $750.00 in the grab bag! Who will be the next lucky winner?

Photo by Gary McLarry

Yes You CAN Make Missouri Litter-Free

The annual "Yes You CAN Make Missouri Litter-Free" trash-can-decorating contest is underway and looking for entrants. Elementary, middle and home school students K-8 are invited to help in the fight against litter in the Show-Me State -- and to have creative and educational fun. Visit the website for more information and to enter - No MOre Trash!

December Retirements

Donna Anderson - SW - 6 yrs
David Deeds - SW - 28 yrs
Harry Edwards - CD - 19 yrs
Robert Filkins - CD - 19 yrs
Duane Huyser - CD - 26 yrs
Kevin Jenkins - KC - 29 yrs
Mark Mitchell - SL - 30 yrs
Jerry Baker - CO - 4 yrs
James Carney - CO - 25 yrs

In Memorium

William Rayles
former D9 – October 18
Duane Cooley
former D1 – November 8
Leonard Militzer
former D6 – November 11
Ervin Gillman
former D6 – November 15
Terry Hostetter
former D4 – November 18
Delmas Moore
former D9 – November 23
Jack Gross
CO – November 24
Robert Bailey
former D3 – December 5
George Elam
former D2 – December 6
Teddy Curtis
former D8 – December 10
Thomas Conant
former D4 – December 12
Clyde Rainey
former D1 – December 17
Randy Cook
former D7 – December 17
Austin McQuinn II
former D1 – December 18
Thomas Huff
former D5 – December 19

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Winter Safety Tips

With the holiday season still in full swing and several weeks of winter ahead of us, it's important to be mindful of some important safety tips.

Holiday parties

- Don't drink and drive; buzzed driving is drunk driving
  - designate a driver or call a cab or a friend to drive you home
  - law enforcement is out in full force this time of year

Holiday shopping

- Drive defensively and obey the speed limits
  - don't drive when you are tired
  - don't talk or text on your cell phone
  - make sure kids are in the appropriate safety seats and everyone is buckled up

Winter weather

- Driving in snow and ice can be tricky
  - allow plenty of time to get to where you are going
  - check the travel advisory map at www.modot.org or call 1-888-ASK-MoDOT before heading out
  - keep a flashlight, flares, jumper cables, batteries, blankets, car jacks and other items you might need in your vehicle in case you break down
  - watch this video on winterizing your car - video

Central Office Happenings

Caroling for a Cause

To spread a little holiday cheer and collect food for a good cause, Brenda Morris, Mara Campbell and Roberta Broeker (left to right) serenaded central office employees with a few holiday tunes.

The singing Elves took the opportunity to collect canned good and cash for the Samaritan Center in Jefferson City.

Four large boxes of food and $114 dollars were collected. Thanks to everyone who donated!

Photo by Cathy Morrison

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Northwest District

Blizzard in Northwest Missouri Closes Interstate 29

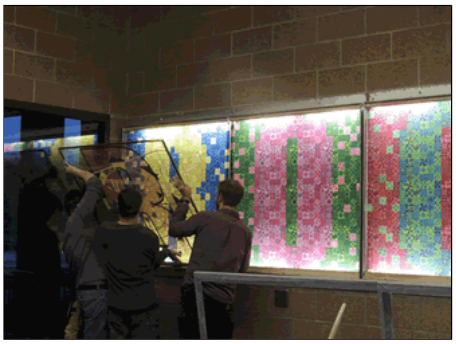
A snowstorm hit Northwest Missouri on Dec. 20 with a vengeance. Accumulations were not significant across the district, ranging from just over half an inch in Rock Port and St. Joseph to just over one inch in Chillicothe. High wind gusts up to 54 mph caused blowing snow and blizzard conditions, however, closing I-29 for a few hours as it became too hazardous for both travelers and MoDOT snow plow drivers. Crews were able to get back on the interstate after a short time and had it reopened, much to the relief of stranded holiday travelers!

Maintenance Crew Leader Dave Yarnell's picture as he plowed and treated along continuous operation routes in St. Joseph was a hit on Facebook on the day of the blizzard. His image was shared over 40 times, got over 600 likes and more than 30 comments - most of them thanking ALL MoDOT workers for their help and dedication throughout the storm. We couldn't agree more!

As seen from an overpass in northern Buchanan County, many motorists were back on I-29 after it reopened.

New Mural Installed at Rock Port Welcome Center

Artist Matt Dehaemers of Kansas City had a vision in glass and light. As the artist chosen for the mural at the new Rock Port Welcome Center, he was charged with transforming a bare cinder block wall into a piece of public art. On Dec. 14, Dehaemers and his team installed the new artwork that tells the story of different forms of energy throughout various modern times using glass panels. The city of Rock Port, where the Welcome Center is located, is entirely powered by wind energy - a theme that can be seen in both the older versions of windmills in the C and K panels and the modern versions shown in the P, O, R and T panels. Behind the glass, plexiglas sheets with small quilt blocks replicate the letters found on the glass panels. As many quilters will tell you, each quilt block pattern is known by a unique name. Dehaembers chose patterns that directly related to transportation or energy to form the background of the mural.



Artist Matt Dehaemers watches his team install one of four frames that will hold the led lights, plexiglas and glass panels that make up the completed mural.

The artist with the left-hand side of the completed mural. . .

The first of eight glass panels is installed. Each panel is actually two pieces of thick glass with a film sandwiched between them.

. . .and then the right-hand side.

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Comments & Suggestions

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Northeast District

More "Eyes" on the Road

by Tana Akright

Thanks to web and satellite technology, internet users can check out actual traffic flow at two new locations in the Northeast District on Interstate 70 in Montgomery and Warren Counties. "Three web cameras have been placed in different locations and take snapshots of the interstate," explained MoDOT District Maintenance and Traffic Engineer Jennifer Hinson. The pictures are taken every two minutes and immediately available on the Traveler Information Map on MoDOT's website at www.modot.org/.

The cameras, located at Warrenton at the 193.6 mile marker which is a westbound view from MO 47, and two in the High Hill area at mile marker 180 westbound and 181.6 eastbound, are capable of swiveling to view both east and westbound traffic along the interstate which will be helpful to travelers during the winter when road conditions can change quickly.

MoDOT's Traffic Engineers and Transportation Management Center operators can monitor traffic in real-time to view traffic flow and identify potential congestion creating incidents, such as crashes and stalled vehicles, and direct the appropriate emergency response forces to those incidents.

Additional cameras have been placed on I-70 near Warrenton and High Hill to help monitor traffic. They are depicted on the traveler information map at mile markers 193.6, 180, and 181.6.

MoDOT's Northeast District has five cameras operating on Interstate 70 in addition to nearly 300 cameras installed along interstate highways and state routes in the St. Louis area.

Blizzard-Like Conditions Introduce Travelers to Winter

All of northern Missouri was hit with its first blast of winter the week before Christmas. MoDOT crews battled the storm into the weekend due to refreeze and continues to clean up some of the minor roads this week. Simon Begley, Palmyra maintenance supervisor and part of the "virtual office" pilot program, took this picture with his new iphone.

Around the District...

Out With The Old...In With The New

by Marisa Christy-Kerns

In the Bolder Five-Year Direction, fleet reduction was one of the key factors in meeting the expected savings of the plan. To date the Northeast District has reduced its fleet inventory by 55 units, with 48 units left to go. These disposals have resulted in $258,000 being brought back in to go towards the roads. In addition, we have 158 excess non-fleet items (ex. plows, spreaders, etc.) that have been offered to other districts. The items not grabbed by other districts will be sent to public auction in the spring.

"Our goal is to keep the best equipment out on the roads so that our operations run smoothly with minimal break downs," said Roy Hogsett, general services manager. "By getting rid of several of our older fleet items, it has allowed us the opportunity to purchase some new units that will have a longer useful life," he added.

Some of the new units purchased include: a motor grader at Shelbina, a back hoe at Bowling Green, and a skid loader at Macon maintenance. Ten XHD trucks and two cars have been ordered and are expected to arrive in early 2013, as well as, a wheeled excavator that will be roving around the district. Finally, we can expect to see 15 lease tractors coming in March 2013.

Office On the Go

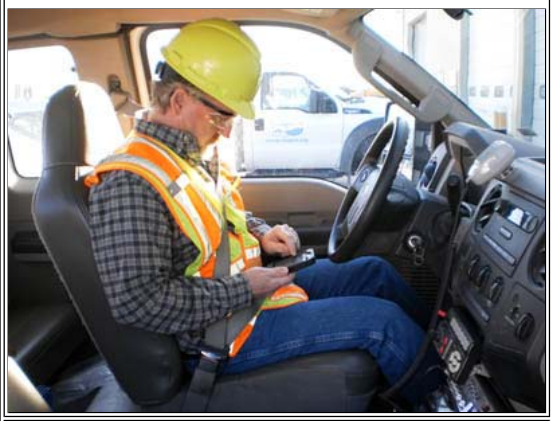
by Tana Akright

Many MoDOT employees spend the day working on the road or in the field away from their desks and computers and have to find time for paperwork when they get back to their building. Since several MoDOT departments have grown smaller, we are challenged to find ways to work more efficiently while providing excellent customer service. That is why a statewide "virtual office" team was recently formed to find ways for our maintenance employees to work more effectively from the job site using pint sized computer or mobile technology - smartphones and iPads.

The statewide team has designated four maintenance supervisors in each district to begin using the smartphones. In the Northeast District, Maintenance Supervisors Scott Thompson - Macon, Scott McLaughlin - Paris, Simon Begley - Palmyra and Dion Thurman – New Florence began using smartphones in the field; Scott Thompson and Scott McLaughlin will be receiving iPads to test in the coming months.

The supervisors will use the "virtual office" technology to complete selected administrative tasks they would normally complete with a desktop computer at their maintenance buildings; supervisors will be working from the field on time/crew reports, customer service call reports, One Call ticket requests, e-mails directing the payment of bills and invoices, and answering general e-mails and text messages as well as other various tasks.

The pilot project, which concludes March 2013, will be evaluated to determine if any time and productivity was gained through the use of the mobile technology. The maintenance supervisors, who were chosen based on their varied levels of knowledge with technological devices, will be surveyed regularly to determine how effective the use of the mobile devices were for them in the field. The MoDOT IS staff is working closely with the maintenance supervisors to provide training and support.



Dion Thurman, New Florence maintenance supervisor, checks his email on his new iphone. Dion is part of the "virtual office" pilot project to help make field workers more efficient with paperwork.

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KansasCity District

MoDOT Weighs Regional Rapid Rail Plan

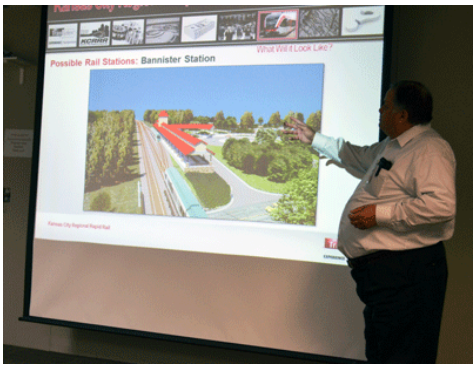
by Steve Porter

Engineers from TranSystems presented the regional rapid rail plan to MoDOT on Friday, Dec. 21 and for even those who are already familiar with the general concept, there were some details that drew added attention.

Jackson County Executive Mike Sanders has spearheaded the effort to take advantage of existing commercial rail corridors – some of them highly active, others idle or nearly so – for use as passenger corridors using lighter diesel-driven, commuter-style cars. He and proponents hope to place a ballot measure before Jackson County voters in August that would initiate and fund a system that could initially serve Jackson County eastward to Oak Grove, southeastward to Lee's Summit and Greenwood, and south to Grandview.

Each of these lines also could be extended beyond the county's boundaries: Northeast toward Liberty and beyond; south into Belton, Peculiar and Harrisonville; southeast into Pleasant Hill; and westward into Wyandotte County, then north across the Missouri River and up into Platte County, Riverside and KCI.

MoDOT engineers viewed the rail routes along the old inactive Rock Island, and the very active Burlington-Northern, Missouri Pacific and Kansas City Southern routes. The routes would not only serve many of the communities, but also high employment areas such as the new NNSA campus near I-49 and Route 150, or entertainment venues such as the Truman Sports Complex or Independence Events Center. Any of the routes would provide alternative transportation and potentially ease highway congestion. Each would connect to cross-country railroad terminals at Union Station, Independence, Lee's Summit and beyond. Local bus and trolley connections also would enhance the alternative transportation network.



A typical local station would require less than 300 feet of access along the rail line.

Other aspects of the presentation raised interest with District Engineer Dan Niec, Assistant District Engineer Brian Kidwell and Area Engineers Shelie Daniel and Matt Killion. Some existing railroad bridges – at Stadium Drive west of the Sports Complex, or Route 50 near Noland Road – are currently restrictive bottlenecks that could be remedied through working with the proposed Regional Rapid Transit agency, even prior to the ballot issue. Memoranda of understanding can be negotiated that will allow both passenger rail and highway planners to consider infrastructure replacements or modifications that will benefit both parties.

MoDOT engineers and planners came away from the meeting with greater understanding of the potential of regional rapid transit, more possibilities and a view of a few opportunities and challenges.

District Hosts 2012 Tool & Equipment Challenge

21 Entries Showcase Safety and Efficiency

Photos and story by Kerri Lewis

The Kansas City District prides itself on being innovative and safety conscious. This holds true based on the 2012 Tool & Equipment Challenge held Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2012. With 21 entries, innovations came from almost every corner of the district. Each focused on safety, efficiency, ease of use and cost. Six entries were selected as the district's winners.

The winners, in no particular order are:

Tab Remover: Bill Burnett, Platte City
The tab remover speeds up the removal of reflective tabs that have been applied to our chip seals. Scraping up with a shovel or bucket tears up the chip seal. Pulling up hundreds with pliers is hard on a person's back. This device is a 3-foot long pair of pliers that eliminates the need to fully bend at the waist.

Spreader Power Unit: Jeff Bailey, Independence
This is a portable unit that powers a spreader without being hooked up to a truck. Applications are for doing preventive maintenance after snow season and general repair.

Swing Chute: Jeff Bailey, Independence and Kelly Anspach, Odessa

Our spreaders have the chute right in front of the hitch. It is in the way when it's time to hook up a tow plow or a trailer. This innovation swings the chute up and out of the way so our tow plows can hook to the truck.

Tractor Adaptor Hitch: Kelly Yager and Justin Anderson, Sedalia
This innovation attaches to a three point tractor hitch and is plumbed with hydraulic fittings that match up with our hydraulic broom set ups. This allows the tractor to pull a broom on chip seal operations.

Band Expander: Michael Johnson, Knob Noster
This device expands corrugated metal pipe (CMP) splicing bands for easier and safer pipe installation.

Project Clean Out: Damon Rinehart and Matt Kavanaugh, Kearney
One big problem with telspar bases is when you pull them, there is no easy way to get the dirt and clay out of the tube so we can reuse them. This invention uses gravity, air and water to blast the compacted dirt from the tube and allows reuse. It's a $35 savings every time one gets cleaned out.

Judges reviewed each innovation during the December 12 Tool & Equipment Challenge. Each entry was ranked on safety, efficiency, cost and ease of use.

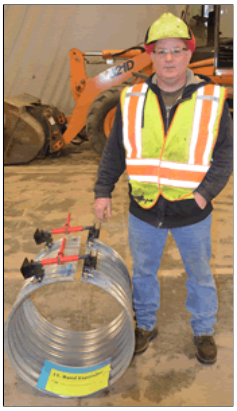
"We had a great competition. All the entries were excellent. The KC District again demonstrated that we do what it takes to perform our jobs safer and more efficient," said Assistant District Engineer Chris Redline.

The next step is to submit the six KC District Tool & Equipment Challenge winners into the statewide competition. District coordinators and a Central Office review team will choose as many as 30 innovations to compete at the statewide showcase in early spring 2013. Evaluators will select up to four statewide winners per category at the showcase. Statewide winners will earn $425 per individual or maximum of $1,550 per team and an extra $10,000 for the district budget.

Congratulations to all who entered the competition. The 21 entries include:

- **Tab Placer #1:** Travis Coats, Richmond
- **Tab Placer #2:** Travis Coats, Richmond
- **Shovel Securer:** Platte City Crew
- **Snow Blade Installer:** Platte City Crew
- **Tab Remover:** Bill Burnett, Platte City
- **Tarp Saver:** Deon Grigsby, Wes Squire, Kearney
- **Speader Chute Mods:** Deon Grigsby, Damon Rinehart, Kearney
- **Guardrail Buildup Pusher:** Loren Dickmeier, Odessa
- **Spreader Stand:** Jeff Bailey and George Parker, Independence, and Kelly Anspach, Odessa
- **Spreader Power Unit:** Jeff Bailey, Independence
- **Swing Chute:** Jeff Bailey, Independence
- **Tractor Adaptor Hitch**: Kelly Yager, Justin Anderson, Sedalia
- **Tow Plow Modifications**: Deon Grigsby, Damon Rinehart, Matt Kavanaugh, Kearney
- **Universal Post Puller:** Deon Grigsby, Kearney
- **Band Expander:** Michael Johnson, Knob Noster
- **Guardrail Sign Mount:** Dale Malott, Liberty
- **Gator Sprayer:** Joe Sims, Liberty
- **Pickup Mounted GR/GC Sprayer:** Andy Bolling, Marshall
- **CMS Leveler:** Scott Banes, Lee's Summit
- **Project Clean Out:** Damon Rinehart and Matt Kavanaugh, Kearney
- **Trailer Light Tester:** Northmoor Crew

KC District Winners:



**Band Expander:
Michael Johnson, Knob Noster**

**Project Clean Out: Left to Right:
Damon Rinehart and Matt
Kavanaugh, Kearney**

Swing Chute: Jeff Bailey, Independence and Kelly Anspach, Odessa (not pictured)

Tractor Adaptor Hitch: Left to right:
Kelly Yager and Justin Anderson, Sedalia

Spreader Power Unit:
Jeff Bailey, Independence

Tab Remover:
Bill Burnett, Platte City

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Private Donation Enhances Bond Bridge

There's a new way to relax in Hermann.

Thanks to the generosity of local residents Dave and Nancy Fagerness, a new pedestrian bench now graces the middle of three alcoves on the Christopher S. Bond Bridge.

Dave Fagerness approached Area Engineer Preston Kramer a few months ago with the idea of donating a bench for the bridge.

"I told him that was a very interesting idea, but that I'd need to check it out, as it was a request I'd never really experienced before," said Area Engineer Preston Kramer.

Kramer contacted the Central District's bridge liaison and ADA expert to work out the details for accepting the bridge donation. Kramer then helped Mr. Fagerness select a bench that met our requirements and his goals.

Maintenance staff from the Drake maintenance facility recently installed a new pedestrian bench on the Christopher S. Bond Bridge in Hermann. The bench was donated by a local couple. Pictured from left to right are Jon Schneider, Jeremy Diebal, Kory Hecht, Rick Starke and Robert Hesemann.

The eight-foot long metal bench, which weighs more than 400 pounds, was delivered to the Drake maintenance facility and assembled and installed by our maintenance staff there.

Kramer spoke with Mr. Fagerness after the bench was installed and reported Mr. Fagerness was pleased with the result. In fact, the Fagerness' plan to buy a second bench for the bridge's southern alcove, which is closest to Hermann.

In an interview with County News Live, a local online publication, Mr. Fagerness laughingly said, "I walk the length of the bridge every day, and one day I may not be able to make it all the way across, and I'll need a place to sit."

Kramer summed up the generous donations this way: "The world needs more Dave Fagerness.'"

Crews Face First Snow Fight of the Season

With temperatures still in the 50s and 60s in early December, many thought we might never get that first snow. That thought ended for most of the state on Dec. 20, when all but portions of southern Missouri experienced some level of snow, coupled with high winds.

Central District was geared up and ready to battle the storm. While we didn't receive a great deal of snow, the snow we did receive, coupled with high winds, caused a rash of accidents. The winds even prompted us to close I-70 for a brief period due to white-out conditions.

The snow fight showed the importance of the new Customer Service bucket system, as many of the calls fielded in the customer service center were from the Kansas City and St. Joseph areas, which were hit hard by

Central District experienced its first taste of winter weather on Dec. 20.

snow and blizzard-like conditions. Central District sent 10 crew workers to St. Joseph and five to Kansas City to help the Northwest District battle the storm.

“Our maintenance crews were ready to go,” said District Maintenance Engineer Mark Giessinger. “It was a hectic day, but I’m pleased with how we handled it.”

The snow fight also provided another chance for newly trained snow plow operators to ride along with their more experienced counterparts.

Route K Project Complete

A highway construction project designed to increase safety and help boost tourism in Boone County is complete. The work to resurface and add shoulders and bicycle lanes along a seven-mile stretch of Route K finished up last week, six months after crews began the initial work.

“Now that this project is finished, Route K will be safer for those who travel by vehicle and by bicycle,” said Area Engineer Mike Schupp. “The new four-foot shoulders and bicycle lanes that have been constructed will help both bikes and motorized vehicles better share the road.”

The new bike lanes, which run from Route 163 to the Katy Trail system in McBaine, are also expected to boost tourism in the area. APAC-Missouri, Inc. of Columbia, Mo., was the contractor on the $2 million project.

News to Note

- The January Meeting of the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission will be held Jan. 16-17 at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Columbia.
- The Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission recently recognized Area Engineer Mike Schupp with a Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding contributions and dedication to planning commission projects and activities.

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St. Louis District

MoDOT Thanks St. Louis Motorists for Patience During This Year's Major Construction

by Kara Price
Photo by Andrew Gates

MoDOT's St. Louis District Engineer Ed Hassinger recently announced to St. Louis motorists that three major construction projects in the metropolitan area are near completion: I-270 widening project for the northbound direction, I-64 double deck (Poplar Street Bridge) rehabilitation and I-44 at Antire pavement replacement.

"I want to thank St. Louis motorists for their patience during these three major construction projects. I understand they caused traffic headaches and inconvenience during your daily commute," said Hassinger.

He added, "I strongly feel you will be pleased with the benefits our hard work will bring and you will experience smoother and safer travel in the future."

The St. Louis district opened the new lane on northbound Interstate 270 from I-44 to Manchester Road (Route 100) right before the Christmas holiday, which was a nice holiday present for St. Louis motorists.

MoDOT expanded this 3 1/2 mile section of interstate from four to five lanes as part of a major widening project to improve traffic congestion. With this new lane, it will allow for more vehicles to travel through this section of I-270 during morning rush periods.

MoDOT urges motorists merging onto I-270 from I-44 not to stop and merge. The lane is now open and motorists need to keep moving. Construction for the added southbound lane from Dougherty Ferry to I-44 will begin in spring 2013.

In downtown St. Louis, MoDOT has made several improvements to the I-64 double deck over the past decade to help it better survive a potential earthquake. Most of that rehabilitation work on the double deck structure is now complete. Crews have some work in early January to wrap up the project. This will require approximately one more week of up to two lanes closed eastbound (as needed) as crews are working on repairing some of the overhead lanes.

On I-44 in Southwest St. Louis County, MoDOT is wrapping up major work on a pavement replacement project from Lewis Road to Antire Road. During this year's construction, MoDOT rebuilt the pavement so motorists have a smoother commute. Guard cable is an added safety feature to this section of I-44 to help prevent crossover crashes. To complete this project, crews will perform striping work early next year, weather/temperature permitting. There will be periodic lane closures during non-peak travel times.

Send a Holiday Greeting to Support our Fellow MoDOT Teammate

MoDOT's Military Employees Resource Group (MERG) is requesting help from its fellow employees. Randy Hargis, senior maintenance worker for the St. Clair Bridge crew, left for military leave in October 2012. Shortly after beginning his assignment, an IED exploded very near him. He is currently recovering after multiple surgeries for severe shrapnel injuries.

As a tribute to his service for our country and to show him that MoDOT cares, the MERG team would like to encourage all employees to send a holiday greeting to Hargis. His family welcomes the caring thoughts from his fellow MoDOT teammates.

Greetings cards and warm wishes for Hargis' recovery can be sent to:

Randy Hargis
c/o SAMMC
3551 Roger Brook Drive
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

Inside Look of Blanchette Bridge Rehab

The westbound I-70 Blanchette Bridge rehabilitation continues with Walsh Construction crews removing the steel truss, other steel members and the concrete on the 23 spans of the bridge. Demolition will continue in January and then the work will begin to rebuild the bridge piece by piece.

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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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OSCEOLA PUBLIC MEETING: One of the Southwest District's major projects scheduled for construction in 2013 is a new interchange at Route 13 and Route 82 in Osceola, which has been in the planning stages for many years. Project Manager Stacy Reese, right, answers a St. Clair County resident's questions about the project during a public meeting on Dec. 6. (Photo: Angela Eden)

HIGH WINDS, POOR VISIBILITY: Plowing snow Thursday, Dec. 20, on Route 7 between Clinton and Creighton are Clinton Maintenance Crew Leader Dennis Bowers and Clinton Intermediate Maintenance Worker Monty Hilte. Crews across much of the Southwest District were out well before daylight that day to plow, treat or patrol. Not much snow fell, but winds that gusted as high as 40 mph to 50 mph in some areas kept snow drifting back across roads and limited visibility. The Southwest District sent 28 snowplow operators to the Kansas City District to help in the Platte City, Knob Noster, Harrisonville and Sedalia areas. (Photo: Gary McLarry)

A snowstorm forecast for Christmas Day failed to develop, although skeleton crews were on duty along I-44 and in areas to the south late Christmas Day afternoon and overnight into Wednesday morning. The Emergency Operations Center was staffed between 3 p.m. and 11 p.m. Christmas Day.

Major Construction Projects Completed During Busy 2012

by Bob Edwards

A lively construction year in the Southwest District saw the completion of 80 jobs costing $120 million. They include the final set of projects in the decades-long effort to convert Route 71 to Interstate 49 and the culmination of the Route 60/65 interchange reconstruction in Springfield that took 3 1/2 years.

The Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program, with 135 bridges replaced or rehabilitated in the Southwest District, was wrapped up after 3 1/2 years of work. Safe & Sound originally had been scheduled to take five years to complete work on 802 bridges statewide.

"Our program was very large," District Construction Engineer Steve Campbell said of the 2012 season, amounting to about 25 percent of the statewide construction program.

Teamwork among resident engineers, inspectors and contractors enabled the district to complete its program with a fine on-time and on-budget performance record.

"It's a collaborative process," Campbell said. "There's a ton of communication. Our successes are the result of a lot of work by everyone in our project offices. It's a lot easier now that we are all paddling in the same direction."

The Route 43/Big Lost Creek bridge in Seneca was replaced under Safe & Sound in 2012. (Photo: Marvin Morris)

District Engineer Becky Baltz also cited teamwork as extremely important to the district's accomplishments even as everyone was adjusting to MoDOT's mid-2011 reorganization under the Bolder Five-Year Direction.

"We were in a transition period with personnel and we got the job done," she said.

The importance of ongoing partnerships with local communities in southwest Missouri cannot be underestimated, Baltz added.

"That's one reason why our program continues to be strong," she said.

Other noteworthy projects completed in 2012 included:

The 60/65 interchange reconstruction in Springfield was completed in 2012. (Photo: Archer Western Contractors)

- Route 13 four-laning between Branson West and Kimberling City.
- Four-laning of Route 65 between Warsaw and Lincoln.
- Conversion of Chestnut Expressway to a Diverging Diamond Interchange at Route 65 in Springfield.

Turn lanes were added and the intersection widened at Route 76 and Route T east of Branson in 2012. (Photo: Tom Anna)

- Resurfacing of 263 miles of major roads and 386 miles of rural two-lane roads.
- Route 160/13 six-laning to Plainview Road south of Springfield.
- New round-about at Route 96 and Route 43 near Webb City.
- New traffic signal and u-turn lanes at Route 60/413 and Oakwood Avenue in Republic.
- Left-turn lanes at seven intersections along Route 160/13 between Highlandville and Reeds Spring Junction.

For more info

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Jackson Region Uses Safety Jackpot Points to Help Area Children

The SE District Jackson, Perryville, Cape Girardeau, Patton and Marble Hill shed employees have opted to give back to their communities by using Safety Jackpot money to purchase toys for underprivileged children.

"We know there are children in our area in need," said Marble Hill Shed Supervisor Daniel Lacy. "So, we decided to pool our money and give back to our community."

The sheds combined their points and redeemed them for toys to be given to Bollinger County Social Services. The toys will be distributed to families in the area. The group was able to purchase toys for 32 children.

Photo: Jackson Region Maintenance Workers Christopher Ordonia (Jackson), Terry Sanders (Perryville), Chase Robins (Marble Hill) and Brad Cook (Patton), display toys purchased with Safety Jackpot points.

Ribbon Cutting Held to Celebrate Nearing Completion of I-55 Outer Road Project

MoDOT held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the nearing completion of the outer road project along Interstate 55 in Scott City on Dec. 18.

A video of the ribbon cutting ceremony is also available at www.youtube.com/MoDOTSoutheast.

The project included grading, paving, signal installation at the I-55 and Route AB interchange, and construction of an outer road from Route K to Route AB near Scott City. Additionally, a new bridge was constructed over Ramsey Creek.

Final work is currently underway, with contractors installing guardrail and striping. The outer road is expected to open by the end of the year, weather permitting.

Speakers included:

- Mr. Tom Schulte on behalf of U.S. Senator Roy Blunt
- Scott County Presiding Commissioner Jamie Burger
- MoDOT Assistant District Engineer Matt Seiler

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission awarded a contract for the project in June 2010. The $4,333,380 contract was awarded to R.L. Persons Construction Inc., Poplar Bluff, Mo.

To view videos and photos from the event, please visit www.modot.org/southeast/news_and_information/special_events/I-55OuterRoad_Dec2012.htm.

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